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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [EUN](#) [BK](#)
SUBJECT: USNATO/USEU: NAC-PSC MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
DIFFERENCES OVER OHR-EUSR AND EUFOR TRANSITIONS

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Walter S. Reid for reason
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11. (U) This is a joint USNATO-USEU cable.

12. (C) SUMMARY. NATO HQ Sarajevo Commander Brigadier General Errico and Deputy SACEUR and EUFOR Operational Commander General McColl briefed a joint meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) on March 23 on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Both stressed the importance of NATO-EU cooperation. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer expressed concern with the BiH political situation, but EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana was optimistic that there was sufficient political progress for the OHR-EUSR transition to take place soon. Chairman of the EU Military Committee General Bentegeat added that the BiH security situation was stable, and EUFOR should be able to move toward reconfiguration into a non-executive, training mission. The U.S. cautioned the EU not to take its eyes off the ball, saying the 5-plus-2 objectives/conditions should be fulfilled first. END SUMMARY.

NATO-EU COOPERATION IN BIH REMAINS GOOD

13. (C) NATO Secretary General (SYG) Jaap de Hoop Scheffer welcomed new NATO HQ Sarajevo Commander Brigadier General Errico (Italy) and Deputy SACEUR and EUFOR Operational Commander General John McColl (UK), saying that NATO-EU cooperation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continues to be a success. EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana echoed this sentiment and expressed the hope that this would continue. General McColl added that NATO-EU cooperation was working very well at all levels and called "Berlin Plus" in BiH a proven success. The U.S. welcomed the NAC-PSC as an opportunity to exercise NATO-EU cooperation.

NATO-EU DIFFERENCES ON BIH POLITICAL SITUATION

14. (C) SYG de Hoop Scheffer expressed concern about the political situation in BiH, saying he was encouraged by the Prud process but noting that progress to date remained disappointing. He observed that 2009 was an opportunity for Bosnian political leaders to move the situation forward, given that there are no elections scheduled. High Rep Solana was more optimistic. He said the Prud process was moving in

the right direction and expressed hope that that the 5-plus-2 objectives/conditions would be met soon.

15. (C) Turkey and Norway called the political situation fragile, and Hungarian PermRep Martinusz, who reportedly was recently selected to serve as EU Council Secretariat Eastern Europe/Balkans/Central Asia head of unit, said he shared the NATO SYG's assessment. Martinusz expressed concern that Euro-Atlantic integration was proving an insufficient incentive to moderate Bosnian political leaders' behavior and urged NATO and EU unity of purpose and action in keeping pressure on the BiH leadership.

OHR/EUSR TRANSITION

16. (C) High Rep Solana noted that new OHR/EUSR Valentin Inzko would need everyone's support, and the NATO SYG welcomed Inzko's appointment and said he could count on NATO backing. EU High Rep Solana, supported by Slovenian PermRep to NATO Cerar, said that BiH political progress should allow OHR to transition to EUSR soon, and he expressed hope that the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) at its meeting in June could take the decision to close OHR.

17. (C) The U.S., supported by Norway and Turkey, cautioned the EU against rushing to OHR and EUFOR transition, evoking the analogy of a wide receiver who takes his eyes off the ball to look toward the end zone and thereby misses the catch. It is important for the 5-plus-2 objectives/conditions to be fulfilled before considering such

moves. Norwegian PermRep to NATO Traavik added that moving too quickly under current political circumstances would be risky and called for Bonn Powers to be retained for as long as necessary. Turkey said a strong OHR remained necessary to counter any secessionist moves by Republika Srpska.

EU MOVING TOWARDS DOWNSIZING EUFOR

18. (C) The NATO SYG asked for close NATO-EU consultations over reconfiguring EUFOR, noting NATO's stake in the issue and also recalling that this was the only "Berlin Plus" operation. Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Di Paola, supported by BG Errico, added that close NATO-EU cooperation would be essential to ensure BiH defense reform continues. BG Errico called for close synchronization of efforts should EUFOR reconfigure, especially if the new EUFOR is focused primarily on a training mission.

19. (C) High Rep Solana expressed optimism that there is an EU consensus to maintain EUFOR at present force levels until a decision is taken to transition to a non-executive training mission. The Czech Presidency PSC Ambassador added that EU Defense Ministers meeting in Prague on March 16 had decided to keep preparatory work for EUFOR reconfiguration under review in order to be in a position to take a decision as soon as conditions merit. Sweden called for EU preparedness to move quickly to reconfigure EUFOR and said the mission should continue under "Berlin Plus." Neither France nor Italy, strong proponents of reconfiguration, commented.

110. (C) Chairman of the EU Military Committee General Bentegeat assessed that the BiH security situation was stable and called for this to be reconciled with expressions of political concern so that EUFOR could move forward with reconfiguration. General McColl said a CONOPS had been distributed to EUFOR contributors that envisions a small headquarters in theater supplemented by training teams deployed to conduct specific programs. The mission would be complementary with NATO efforts, and BiH was preparing an assessment of its training needs which probably will be completed by mid-April. He cautioned that any further unilateral reductions to EUFOR before a reconfiguration decision is taken would place the force at risk.

¶11. (C) Turkish NATO PermRep Ildem challenged the EU assessment concerning BiH stability and said it was essential to maintain current force levels. He urged EUFOR contributors not to withdraw their forces and said Turkey intends to increase its contribution. He said that Ankara has a strong expectation that NATO and non-EU EUFOR contributors would be consulted before the EU takes a decision on reconfiguration. Hungarian NATO PermRep Martinusz said the timing of reconfiguration would be important, advised that it be synchronized with OHR-EUSR transition, and pledged that Hungary would maintain its EUFOR contribution.

DEFENSE REFORM HINDERED BY POLITICAL PROBLEMS

¶12. (C) The SYG stressed that BiH has made progress in moving down the path toward NATO membership but that political problems are jeopardizing defense reform. NATO's door is open but there remains much for BiH to do.

¶13. (C) BG Errico highlighted as problematic that the BiH was only allocating 2 percent of its defense budget to military modernization. BG Errico added that NATO needs to be realistic and patient in its military advisory role and said political processes such as BiH participation in Intensified Dialogue reinforce the day-to-day advisory work on defense reform. He said NATO involvement must be seen within the wider political context, making continuous political engagement and clear messages to BiH leadership key.
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